General Assembly

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Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 115

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/56/579)*]

56/139. The girl child

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 55/78 of 4 December 2000 and all relevant resolutions, including the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women, in particular those relevant to the girl child,

Recalling also all relevant United Nations conferences and the Declaration and Agenda for Action adopted by the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held at Stockholm from 27 to 31 August 1996,[1] as well as the outcome documents of the recent five-year reviews of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development[2] and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development,[3]

Deeply concerned about discrimination against the girl child and the violation of the rights of the girl child, which often result in less access for girls to education, nutrition and physical and mental health care and in girls enjoying fewer of the rights, opportunities and benefits of childhood and adolescence than boys and often being subjected to various forms of cultural, social, sexual and economic exploitation and to violence and harmful practices, such as female infanticide, incest, early marriage, prenatal sex selection and female genital mutilation,

Recognizing the need to achieve gender equality so as to ensure a just and equitable world for girls,

Deeply concerned that, in situations of poverty, war and armed conflict, girl children are among the victims most affected and that thus their potential for full development is limited,

Concerned that the girl child has furthermore become a victim of sexually transmitted diseases and the human immunodeficiency virus, which affect the quality of her life and leave her open to further discrimination,

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[1] A/51/385, annex.

[2] Resolution S-21/2, annex.

[3] Resolution S-24/2, annex.

Reaffirming the equal rights of women and men as enshrined, inter alia, in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[4] and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[5]

Reaffirming also the political declaration[6] and further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[7] adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",

Reaffirming further the Dakar Framework for Action adopted at the World Education Forum,[8]

Reaffirming the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth special session,[9]

1. *Stresses* the need for full and urgent implementation of the rights of the girl child as guaranteed to her under all human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child[5] and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[4] as well as the need for universal ratification of those instruments;

2. *Urges* States to consider signing, ratifying or acceding to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;[10]

3. *Welcomes* the adoption of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict[11] and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography,[12] and invites States to consider signing and ratifying the Optional Protocols as a matter of priority with a view to their entry into force as soon as possible;

4. *Welcomes also* the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative launched by the Secretary-General at the World Education Forum;

5. *Urges* all Governments and the United Nations system to strengthen efforts bilaterally and with international organizations and private sector donors in order to achieve the goals of the World Education Forum, in particular that of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and to implement the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative as a means of reaching this goal, and reaffirms the commitment contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;[13]

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[4] Resolution 34/180, annex.

[5] Resolution 44/25, annex.

[6] Resolution S-23/2, annex.

[7] Resolution S-23/3, annex.

[8] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Final Report of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000* (Paris, 2000).

[9] Resolution S-26/2, annex.

[10] Resolution 54/4, annex.

[11] Resolution 54/263, annex I.

[12] Ibid., annex II.

[13] See resolution 55/2.

6. *Calls upon* all States to take measures to address the obstacles that continue to affect the achievement of the goals set forth in the Beijing Platform for Action,[14] as contained in paragraph 33 of the further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[7] where appropriate, including the strengthening of national mechanisms to implement policies and programmes for the girl child and, in some cases, to enhance coordination among responsible institutions for the realization of the human rights of girls, as indicated in the further actions and initiatives;

7. *Urges* all States to take all necessary measures and to institute legal reforms to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by the girl child of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, to take effective action against violations of those rights and freedoms and to base programmes and policies for the girl child on the rights of the child;

8. *Urges* States to enact and enforce strictly laws to ensure that marriage is entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses, to enact and enforce strictly laws concerning the minimum legal age of consent and the minimum age for marriage and to raise the minimum age for marriage where necessary;

9. *Urges* all States to fulfil their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as the commitment to implement the Beijing Platform for Action;

10. *Also urges* all States to enact and enforce legislation to protect girls from all forms of violence, including female infanticide and prenatal sex selection, female genital mutilation, rape, domestic violence, incest, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, child prostitution and child pornography, and to develop age-appropriate safe and confidential programmes and medical, social and psychological support services to assist girls who are subjected to violence;

11. *Calls upon* all States and international and non-governmental organizations, individually and collectively, to implement further the Beijing Platform for Action, in particular the strategic objectives relating to the girl child and including the further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;

12. *Urges* States to take special measures for the protection of war-affected girls and in particular to protect them from sexually transmitted diseases, such as human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), and gender-based violence, including rape and sexual abuse, torture, sexual exploitation, abduction and forced labour, paying special attention to refugee and displaced girls, and to take into account the special needs of the war-affected girl child in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes;

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[14] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

13. *Urges* all States and the international community to respect, protect and promote the rights of the child, taking into account the particular vulnerabilities of the girl child in pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict situations, and calls for special initiatives designed to address all of the rights and needs of war-affected girls;

14. *Welcomes* the holding of the International Conference on War-Affected Children at Winnipeg, Canada, from 10 to 17 September 2000, and takes note with appreciation of the Winnipeg Agenda for War-Affected Children;[15]

15. *Urges* States to formulate comprehensive, multidisciplinary and coordinated national plans, programmes or strategies to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, which should be widely disseminated and should provide targets and timetables for implementation, as well as effective domestic enforcement procedures through the establishment of monitoring mechanisms involving all parties concerned, including consultations with women's organizations, giving attention to the recommendations relating to the girl child of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences;

16. *Calls upon* Governments, civil society, including the media, and non-governmental organizations to promote human rights education and the full respect for and enjoyment of the human rights of the girl child, inter alia, through the translation, production and dissemination of age-appropriate information material on those rights to all sectors of society, in particular to children;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General, as Chairman of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination,[16] to ensure that all organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, individually and collectively, in particular the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, take into account the rights and the particular needs of the girl child in the country programme of cooperation in accordance with the national priorities, including through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework;[17]

18. *Requests* all human rights treaty bodies, special procedures and other human rights mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights and its Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights to adopt regularly and systematically a gender perspective in the implementation of their mandates and to include in their reports information on the qualitative analysis of violations of the human rights of women and girls, and encourages the strengthening of cooperation and coordination in that regard;

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[15] A/55/467-S/2000/973, annex.

[16] Formerly known as the Administrative Committee on Coordination (see Economic and Social Council decision 2001/321 of 24 October 2001).

[17] See A/53/226, paras. 72–77, and A/53/226/Add.1, paras. 88–98.

19. *Calls upon* States and international and non-governmental organizations to mobilize all necessary resources, support and efforts to realize the goals, strategic objectives and actions set out in the Beijing Platform for Action and the further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;

20. *Stresses* the importance of a substantive assessment of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action with a life-cycle perspective so as to identify gaps and obstacles in the implementation process and to develop further actions for the achievement of the goals of the Platform;

21. *Welcomes* the convening of the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, at Yokohama, Japan, from 17 to 20 December 2001, and the regional consultative meetings for the preparation thereof, which aim to review the progress made in implementing the Declaration and Agenda for Action adopted by the first World Congress[1] and to strengthen actions to eradicate commercial sexual exploitation of children, and invites Member States and observers to ensure their representation at the Second World Congress at a high political level;

22. *Encourages* the regional commissions and other regional organizations to carry out activities in support of the Second World Congress;

23. *Stresses* the importance of integrating a gender perspective and of considering the needs and rights of the girl child in the work of the special session of the General Assembly on children.

88th plenary meeting
19 December 2001